

# Idaho's Seat Belt Issue Questions and Answers

## Lives Lost & People Injured

- Seat belts, when used, are the most effective safety feature ever introduced for vehicles, cutting the likelihood for fatal and serious injury crashes in half. (Traffic Safety Facts 2003, NHTSA).
- In 2007, 114 Idahoans killed in car crashes were not wearing their seat belts. In addition, 402 unbelted Idahoans were critically injured in 2007 traffic crashes. (ITD 2007 Crash Report)
- In 2007, the 22% of Idahoans that did not buckle up accounted for 65% of the people killed in traffic crashes. (ITD 2007 Crash Report and 2007 Observational Seat Belt Survey)
- In 2007, 85% of occupants killed in DUI crashes were not buckled up. 63% of those killed in speed-related crashes were not buckled up.

## Belt Use by Idahoans On the Decline

- Belt use has declined from 80% in 2006, to 76.9% in 2008.
- Idaho is ineligible for federal seat belt grant funds that previously funded programs credited with improving Idaho's use rate from 58% (1999) to 80% (2006). Thirty-seven (37) states were utilizing these grants in 2007.

## Costly Price Tag

- "The Idaho State budget pays an estimated \$9 million in health care costs every year for traffic crash injuries which would have been prevented by seat belt use," reports Dr. Beth Ebel, director of the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center. "Idaho taxpayers subsidize those individuals who choose not to wear their seat belts despite the state law." Ebel and colleagues analyzed crash rates and seat belt use in Idaho, and estimated the medical cost of providing emergency and trauma care for belted and unbelted crash occupants. In addition, Idaho passed up \$4.5 million in national highway funding for failing to strengthen enforcement of seat belt laws.
- In 2007, the economic impact to Idahoans for motorists killed or injured due to lack of seat belt use was \$861 million. (ITD 2007 Crash Report)
- Every Idahoan, *not the person involved in the traffic crash*, pays 85% of the medical bills associated with car crashes through insurance premiums, county, state, and federal taxes, and increased charges for medical services. (Economic Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes 2000, NHTSA)

## Current Law & Comparison to Neighboring States

- Idaho's seat belt law – \$10 fine for adults is the weakest in the west and tied for the lowest fine in the country. For teens, the fine is \$51.50 because they pay court costs associated with traffic citations. Adults do not pay court costs with their seat belt tickets.
- Idaho's seat belt use rate lags behind use rates for most western states.
- 60% of the public believes that seat belt non-use in Idaho is a moderate or big problem. And 56% support a primary seat belt law. (Public Awareness: Surveying Idaho 2008, Sept 2008, University of Idaho.)

**Seat Belt Usage by Idaho and Bordering States  
(ranked by belt use)**

State	2008 Belt Use Rate	Law Status	Fine
Washington	96%	Standard	\$124
Oregon	96%	Standard	\$97 plus local costs
Nevada	90%	Secondary	\$25 plus costs totaling \$67
Utah	86%	Secondary	\$45
Montana	79%	Secondary	\$20
<b>Idaho</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>\$10</b>
Wyoming	69%	Secondary	\$10 TO \$25

Even at relatively high rates in recent years (such as, observed daytime rates of 80% or greater), many high-risk motorists, including drinking drivers, motorists on the road during late-night hours, young males, drivers with violations and crashes on their record, and occupants involved in fatal crashes still do not buckle up. Future efforts to reduce fatalities and injuries involving unrestrained occupants will need to focus on such high-risk motorists. (Charles Niessner, Transportation Research Board, NCHRP Report 601, *The Impact of Legislation, Enforcement, and Sanctions on Safety Belt Use*, Forward, 2008.)

There is consistent circumstantial evidence to suggest that increased penalties in the form of increased fines and points would result in increased safety belt usage. (Charles Niessner, Transportation Research Board, NCHRP Report 601, *The Impact of Legislation, Enforcement, and Sanctions on Safety Belt Use*, Forward, 2008.)

Buckling up is free and would save resources currently being used to pay for preventable traffic deaths and injuries.

## Other \$10 Secondary Law States

Wisconsin - belt use was 75% in 2006.

Missouri - belt use was 75% in 2006.

Idaho's belt use was 80% in 2006, but has declined along with program funding.

## Belt Use in Idaho has Reduced Deaths and Serious Injuries

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Idaho's Seat Belt Use Rate	58%	59%	60%	63%	72%	74%	76%	80%	78%	77%
Unbelted Fatalities	183	169	149	135	150	113	126	116	114	
Unbelted Seriously Injured	769	729	668	612	545	476	452	384	402	

Note that as seat belt use increased from 58% in 1999 to 80% in 2006, the number of unbelted seriously injured declined from 769 to 384. This is a 50% reduction in unbelted serious injuries.

And unbelted deaths declined by 38%. Note also the steady declines over the years. These aren't just numbers. They are families impacted.

Then in 2007, when incentive funds ran out, seat belt use began declining and unbelted serious injuries began increasing.

This information is from the Idaho Transportation Department's Observational Seat Belt Surveys. The fatality and serious injuries comes from the annual ITD Crash Reports.

## Idaho Costs for Low Belt Use – Harborview Study

Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center conducted a study of Idaho crash data. The following comes from research conducted on crash occupants at St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center from 2001-2004. Dr. Ebel or Max Severaid can provide further details explaining the results. Sravanthi Parasa, MBBS, MPHc, Graduate Student – Epidemiology, NHTSA Research Fellow, Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center is primary contact at [srav@u.washington.edu](mailto:srav@u.washington.edu). HIPRC faculty and staff can be reached by e-mailing the Center at [hiprc@u.washington.edu](mailto:hiprc@u.washington.edu), or calling the receptionist at (206) 744-9430. This information was provided on April 11, 2007 to our Highway Safety Summit.



## Health Care Costs of Unbuckled Vehicle Occupants & Seat Belt Enforcement

### Projected Idaho Cost Savings of Improving Seat Belt Use

Beth E. Ebel, MD, MSc, MPH and Max Severeid



#### Unrestrained passengers are more likely to be injured and require costly medical care

- Seat belts reduce risk of death by 61% - 73% and reduce risk of moderate / severe injury by 50%
- Data from an Idaho trauma hospital show it **costs an extra \$10,432** to care for each unrestrained vehicle passenger.
- An **additional 971 people are admitted** to Idaho hospitals for injuries that would have been prevented by seat belt use.
- An estimated **11,800 people require emergency room care** in Idaho for injuries that would have been prevented by seat belt use.
- **Annual preventable motor vehicle crash (MVC) health care costs paid by Idaho state budgets = \$9,141,252.**

#### Idaho seat belt laws are often ignored but can be effective

- Current Idaho law requires seat belt use by all vehicle occupants, BUT does *not* allow officers to enforce the law unless a driver commits a second violation.
- Washington State example: primary enforcement law; Chief of WA State Patrol made seat belt enforcement core mission; and national Memorial Day Click-It or Ticket program associated with...
  - **12% increase in seat belt use 2001 - 2003**
  - June 2002 - July 2003, **MVC occupant deaths 13% lower** than prior years
- States with primary law experience belt use rates 9.1 percentage points higher than states with secondary enforcement.

#### Higher seat belt use in Idaho would save money

##### Idaho state cost savings through increased seat belt use (\$US 2007):

Seat belt use in Idaho	Current (2006)	Projected		Full Use
	80%	85%	90%	100%
Annual Idaho health care cost savings	-	\$2,353,194	\$4,615,880	<b>\$9,141,252</b>
Annual Idaho highway funds	-	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000
<b>Total annual Idaho cost savings</b>	-	<b>\$6,353,194</b>	<b>\$9,115,880</b>	<b>\$13,641,252</b>

#### Fines for seat belt infractions

- If people who choose not to wear a seat belt had to pay for their own higher medical costs, **each ticket** for an unrestrained occupant **should cost \$340** to recover Idaho state budget health care expenses.
- The current price of a seat belt fine is low relative to similar infractions; tax payers are subsidizing medical costs for passengers who choose not to fasten their seat belt.

##### Infraction fixed penalties (including court costs):

<b>Failure to fasten seat belt</b>	<b>\$10</b>
Pedestrian and bicycle infraction (jay walking)	\$46
Non-moving traffic infractions (broken parking light)	\$52
Failure to carry life preservers in water craft	\$84
Speeding 16+ miles over speed limit	\$140

# Idaho Costs for Low Belt Use - Idaho Trauma Registry

## Summary

This information pertains to people that were hospitalized following traffic crashes from 10-1-06 to 9-30-07. The date comes from the 14 Idaho hospitals that are providing data to the Idaho Trauma Registry. It is matched up with crash data from ITD.

The lack of safety restraint use when involved in a traffic crash has an impact on the number of body regions injured. The non-belted victim are more likely to suffer head, face, thorax, abdomen, lower extremity, and external (burn, other) injuries as compared to the belted victims.

The lack of safety restraint use when involved in a traffic crash has an impact on the average length of hospitalization. 36% of unbelted had an average length of stay of 8+ days, while just 20% of belted had an 8+ day length of stay.

## Report

Idaho Trauma Registry (ITR) records provide information about hospitalization and specific injuries sustained by individuals in motor vehicle accidents. Office of Highway Operations and Safety (OHOS) records provide information about motor vehicle accident circumstances, including information about driver and passenger safety restraint use. When combined, these records tell us about the relationship between safety restraint use and subsequent injuries and hospitalization<sup>1</sup>.

As seen Tables 1 and 2, the lack of safety restraint use when involved in a motor vehicle accident has an impact both on the number of body regions injured<sup>2</sup> and the average length of hospitalization.

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<sup>1</sup> Idaho Trauma Registry hospital records used in the analyses were reported by participating hospitals between October 1, 2006 and September 30, 2007. These records were then matched, where possible, with OHOS motor vehicle accident records from the same period. Vehicles included in the analyses were limited to OHOS vehicle types “car” and “Van/panel/SUV.”

<sup>2</sup> The analysis of Body Regions injured follows reporting by the National Trauma Data Base. Multiple injuries to a single body region in a single incident are counted only once.

Table 1. Use of Safety Restraints and Injuries by Body Region

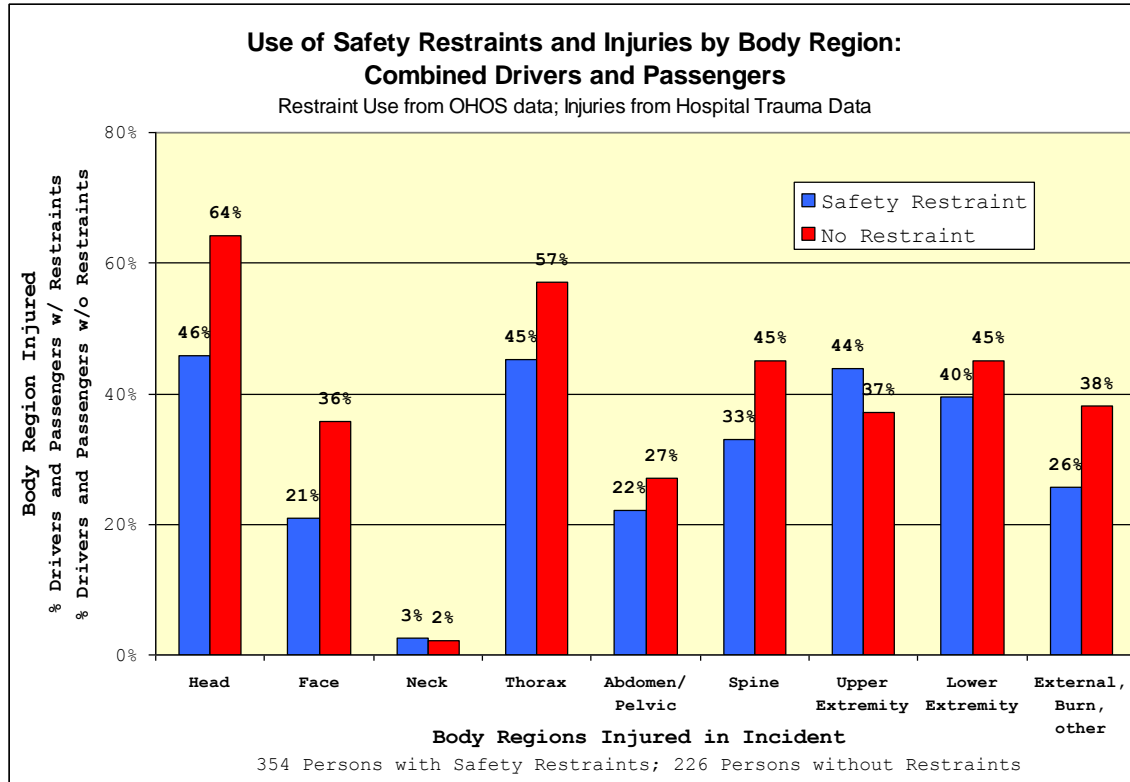
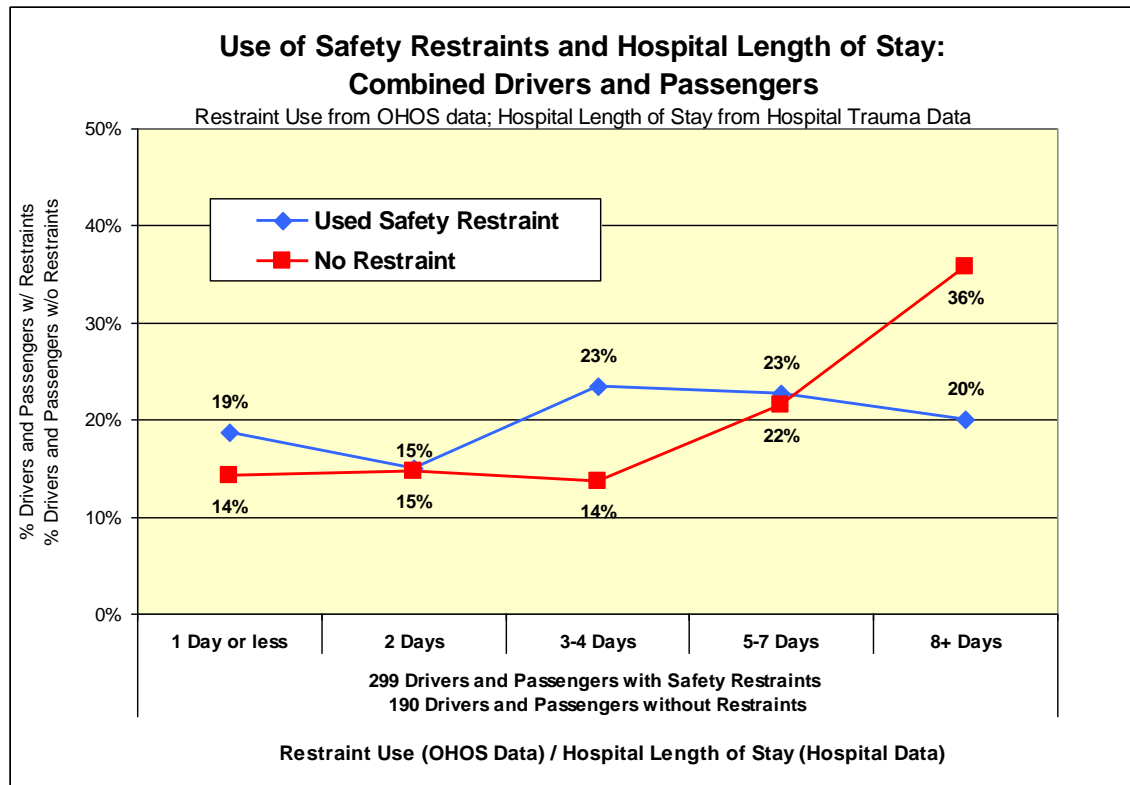


Table 2. Use of Safety Restraints and Hospital Length of Stay



## Court Cost Fine Distribution

The purpose of this legislation is to stop the current inequity that allows adults to not pay the fines that others pay for their traffic tickets, including under-18 year old drivers who don't buckle up.

The new fine structure will provide greater incentive for people to use their seat belts and reduce preventable traffic deaths and serious injuries with the majority of these costs borne by taxpayers.

The costs paid along with almost all other traffic tickets are below. The only differences are bicycle, pedestrian, and state law parking tickets which pay a portion of these. All other traffic tickets pay these:

Fund		Detail	Detail
Court Costs (county courts)	\$16.50		
District Court Fund		\$5.00	
State Treasurer		\$11.50	
86% <b>General Fund</b>			\$9.89
14% Peace Officers Standards and Training Fund			\$1.61
County Justice Fund (support court system)	\$5.00		
Peace Officers Standards and Training Fund	\$10.00		
ISTARS fee (Idaho Statewide Trial Court Automated Records System)	\$10.00		

Below is information about these costs which comes from Idaho Code.

Court Costs - IC 31-3201A court fees; (c) A fee of sixteen dollars and fifty cents (\$16.50) shall be paid, but not in advance, by each person found to have committed an infraction or any minor traffic, conservation or ordinance violation; provided that the judge or magistrate may in his or her discretion consolidate separate nonmoving traffic offenses into one (1) offense for purposes of assessing such fee. If the magistrate court facilities are provided by the county, five dollars (\$5.00) of such fee shall be paid to the county treasurer for deposit in the district court fund of the county; and eleven dollars and fifty cents (\$11.50) of such fee shall be paid to the county treasurer, who shall pay such fees to the state treasurer for deposit in accordance with subsection (p) of this section. If the magistrate court facilities are provided by a city, five dollars (\$5.00) of such fee shall be paid to the city treasurer for deposit in the city general fund, two dollars and fifty cents (\$2.50) of such fee shall be paid to the city treasurer for deposit in the city capital facilities fund for the construction, remodeling and support of magistrate court facilities, and nine dollars (\$9.00) of such fee shall be paid to the county treasurer who shall pay such fees to the state treasurer for deposit in accordance with subsection (p) of this section.

(p) That portion of the filing fees required to be remitted to the state treasurer for deposit pursuant to subsections (a), (b), (c), (d) and (f) of this section shall be apportioned eighty-six percent (86%) to the state general fund and fourteen percent (14%) to the peace officers standards and training fund authorized in section 19-5116, Idaho Code, within five (5) days after the end of the month in which such fees were remitted to the county treasurer. That portion of the filing fees required to be remitted to a city treasurer for deposit in the city's general fund shall be remitted within five (5) days after the end of the month in which such fees were remitted to the county treasurer.

County Justice Fund – Idaho Code § 31-3201(3) provides that each person convicted of an infraction pays a fee of \$5 that goes to the County Justice Fund, or the county's current expense fund if the county has not established a County Justice Fund. Idaho Code § 31-4602 allows the commissioners of any county to

establish a County Justice Fund to provide funding “for the operation of the county sheriff’s department, construction, remodeling, operation and maintenance of county jails, juvenile detention facilities and/or county courthouses, operation of the prosecuting attorney’s office, provision of public defender service and otherwise court-appointed counsel, and operation of the office of the clerk of the district court, to the extent that operation of that office provides support for the district court.”

Peace Officers Standards and Training Fund – Idaho Code § 31-3201B provides that each person convicted of any felony, misdemeanor or infraction is to pay a fee of \$10 to be deposited in the Peace Officers Standards and Training Fund.

ISTARS Fee – Idaho Code § 31-3201(5) provides that any person convicted of a crime or infraction is to pay a \$10 fee to be deposited in the ISTARS Technology Fund. ISTARS is the Idaho Statewide Trial Court Automated Records System. The Fund was created by Idaho Code § 1-1623, and is used for “designated maintenance, replacement, extension or enhancement of the ISTARS program.”

## Additional Funds If Legislation Passes

In 2007, there were about 22,000 seat belt citations written, well below our high of nearly 33,000 in 2005. About 1,000 were for the under-18 year old drivers so they would have had court costs attached. The rest of the citations were likely written without the court costs since they didn’t specify the under-18 year old section of the code. If the same number of citations are written in future years, the increase, \$41.50 X 21,000 tickets = \$871,500. Distribution is as follows:

Distribution	Rate allocated by law	Total that could be received assuming an additional 21,000 seat belt citations that include these costs
Court Costs	\$16.50	\$346,500 ( <b>\$207,690 to General Fund</b> , \$33,810 to Peace Officers Standards and Training, \$105,000 to Dist Court Fund)
County Justice Fund	\$5.00	\$105,000
Peace Officers Standards and Training Fee	\$10.00	\$210,000
ISTARS Technology Fee	\$10.00	\$210,000



## Current \$10 Fine Distribution

### For Citations Written by County and State Agencies

	Breakdown	Further Breakdown
<b>FIXED PENALTY</b>	<b>\$5.00</b>	
District Court Fund (22.5%)	\$1.13	
Public School (22.5%)	\$1.13	
State General Fund (10%)	\$0.50	
State General Fund (86%)		\$0.43
POST Training Fund (14%)		\$0.07
Highway Distribution Acct (45%)	\$2.25	
State Highway Fund (57%)		\$1.28
Law Enforcement Fund (5%)		\$0.11
Local Highway Distribution Fund (38%)		\$0.86
<b>CAT HEALTH CARE COST FUND (CAT)</b>	<b>\$5.00</b>	

### For Citations Written by City Agencies

<b>FIXED PENALTY</b>	<b>\$5.00</b>	
State General Fund (10%)	\$0.50	
State General Fund (86%)		\$0.43
POST Training Fund (14%)		\$0.07
City (90%)	\$4.50	
<b>CAT HEALTH CARE COST FUND (CAT)</b>	<b>\$5.00</b>	

## Funding Opportunities Idaho Lost

Idaho potentially could receive millions of dollars in Federal Highway Safety Program Funding by strengthening our safety restraint laws.

- \$4,543,081 has been available to Idaho beginning in 2006 under SAFETEA-LU from 23 USC Section 406 Safety Belt Performance Grant had Idaho passed a primary seat belt law. Idaho could still qualify by having a primary law enacted and enforced on July 1, 2009. This is a one-time payment.
- There is an additional opportunity for Idaho to qualify for the “powerball” (share of unallocated funds under 23 USC 406 (d)). These funds will be distributed to states that have primary laws enacted and enforced on July 1, 2009. It is impossible to know how much that could be but the maximum is \$1,015,106 for Idaho.

- Idaho could have also qualified by reaching 85% belt use for two consecutive years. Nevada (\$67 fine) attained the 85% criteria and received \$5.5 million in FFY 2008. Utah (\$45 fine) achieved the 85% for two years and received \$6.1 million in FFY 2008. It is too late in this current highway funding authorization for Idaho to qualify since FFY 2009 is the final year and Idaho's seat belt use rate in 2008 was 77%.
- Use of funds:
  - The funds can be used for any highway safety improvement including:
    - intersection improvements,
    - pavement and shoulder widening,
    - installation of rumble strips and other warning devices,
    - improving skid resistance,
    - improvements for pedestrian or bicyclist safety,
    - railway-highway crossing safety,
    - traffic calming,
    - the elimination of roadside obstacles,
    - improving highway signage and pavement marking,
    - installing priority control systems for emergency vehicles at signalized intersections,
    - installing traffic control or warning devices at locations with high accident potential,
    - safety-conscious planning, and
    - improving crash data collection and analysis.
  - \$1 million must go to behavioral safety programs.

Here is the language from the reg's, plus a link to them as well as the implementation guidelines for 406 (there is no distinction made between basic 406 funds and the 'powerball'):

[http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/whatsup/tea21/GrantMan/HTML/Sec\\_2005\\_406.html](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/whatsup/tea21/GrantMan/HTML/Sec_2005_406.html)

[http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/whatsup/tea21/GrantMan/HTML/FR\\_Implementing\\_Guidance\\_1-25-06.pdf](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/whatsup/tea21/GrantMan/HTML/FR_Implementing_Guidance_1-25-06.pdf)

- Approximately \$250,000 from Section 405 Occupant Protection Grant is available by doing one of the following: pass a primary seat belt law, increase the seat belt fine to at least \$25, or delete the nursing baby exemption from child passenger safety law. The funds must be used for occupant protection program activities. This funding was available under TEA-21 as well as SAFETEA-LU (1999 to the present). We can't be sure how much we could have received but by looking at the funding received by Montana for Section 405 from FY1999 through FY 2008, they received \$1,721,309 to spend on their occupant protection programs. If Idaho had received the same as Montana, an average of \$172,131 annually could have been received and used for occupant protection programs. The number of states receiving these funds each year varies from 26 in 2001, to 44 in 2003. (Technically, Idaho could have received \$947,000 annually according to the Section 405 wording.)

In order for Idaho to qualify for Section 405 funding, legislation to delete the nursing baby exemption or increase the seat belt fine, would need to be passed and signed by the Governor by Feb 15 when the state's Section 405 application is due to NHTSA.

- Section 2011 Child Passenger Safety Grant is available to Idaho under SAFETEA-LU by deleting the nursing baby exemption and increasing applicability to age 8, from the current age 7. Funds must be used for child passenger safety program activities. The minimum state funding for the last 3 years totals \$397,612 combined, averaging \$132,537 annually that Idaho could have used for child passenger safety programs.

## Seat Belt Citation to Conviction Process

The cost for processing seat belt tickets written to adults is being subsidized by others. Following is an explanation of the ticketing process provided by Shelly Roe, Nez Perce County Court, 799-3040.

Citation – 10 to 12 minutes of officer's time to make traffic stop, check driver status, and write citation.

Clerk data enters the citation on local computer system. The record is sent to the county court. A county clerk then enters the ticket into ISTARS, creates a case, and creates a file folder (not all courts create file folders).

Then, as many as three of the following processes occur:

- A. Payment Received - When payment is received, the county clerk vacates the hearing record, changes the plea to guilty, shows the fee paid, and rings up the payment in the cash register. If paid in person, the clerk provides a receipt of payment. The money is deposited and the citation record is changed to a conviction on records. If the person needs more time to pay, and people do ask for this, the clerk changes the record to show an infraction deferred payment schedule.
- B. Payment Not Received - The clerk runs overdue processing report. The clerk pulls all cases to be sure that the overdue list is indeed correct and that payment has not been received. The clerk prints up a notice of default. The clerk gives two weeks to pay fine and mails a notice to the defendant. This does happen on seat belt citations. After two weeks, if not paid, the clerk creates a notice of suspension and mails it to the defendant. She verifies status on file and updates records. The records are downloaded to the DMV. The DMV actually does the suspending and give some additional time as well before suspending. They too send notice to the person.

After being suspended, when the defendant pays, the clerk puts payment on the record. ISTARS prints a receipt and notice of reinstatement. This is faxed to the DMV. The DMV still needs a reinstatement fee paid which also must be processed before driving privileges can be reinstated.

- C. Go to Court - If the defendant chooses to go to court over the seat belt ticket, the clerk sets a pre-trial hearing (not all counties do the pre-trial hearing). The clerk sets a pre-trial hearing date and notifies the prosecutor. The citation is copied and sent to the prosecutor. The prosecutor also requests a report from the officer who wrote the citation.

During the pre-trial hearing, the case could be dismissed or the defendant could again be given time to pay the fine.

If the person wants to go to trial, the court must subpoena the officer to attend the trial. The officer will need to go to court which may require that he cease his regular duties, or come in on a day off with paid overtime. The judge and prosecuting attorney attend along with the officer. If found guilty, the person is assessed the \$10 fine. They still get time to pay the fine. And it could still go into default if not paid and then they could have their driving privileges suspended. And much of the process continues.

## Personal Choice Response

Below are some facts related to seat belt use that lead me to believe that the seat belt issue is more than a personal choice issue. It is really a societal cost issue because all Idahoans bear the costs when people don't use the free piece of safety equipment that is already provided in their vehicle.

During these tough economic times, it seems unfair to expect others to continue to pay for the costs for those that choose to not buckle up. And no matter how much we value our right to choose, the reality is that others are paying the price through their insurance premiums, taxes, and increased charges for medical care.

- Seat belts, when used, are the most effective safety feature ever introduced for vehicles, cutting the likelihood for fatal and serious injury crashes in half. (Traffic Safety Facts 2003, NHTSA).
- In 2007, 114 Idahoans killed in car crashes were not wearing their seat belts. In addition, 402 unbelted Idahoans were critically injured in 2007 traffic crashes. (ITD 2007 Crash Report)
- In 2007, the 22% of Idahoans that did not buckle up accounted for 65% of the people killed in traffic crashes. (ITD 2007 Crash Report and 2007 Observational Seat Belt Survey)
- "The Idaho State budget pays an estimated \$9 million in health care costs every year for traffic crash injuries which would have been prevented by seat belt use," reports Dr. Beth Ebel, director of the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center. "Idaho taxpayers subsidize those individuals who choose not to wear their seat belts despite the state law." Ebel and colleagues analyzed crash rates and seat belt use in Idaho, and estimated the medical cost of providing emergency and trauma care for belted and unbelted crash occupants. In addition, Idaho passed up \$4.5 million in national highway funding for failing to strengthen enforcement of seat belt laws.
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- Every Idahoan, not the person involved in the traffic crash, pays 85% of the medical bills associated with car crashes through insurance premiums, county, state, and federal taxes, and increased charges for medical services. (Economic Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes 2000, NHTSA)

Lastly, wearing your seat belt is not optional in Idaho. Idaho Code 49-673 requires that everyone in a vehicle be properly restrained. This law was passed in 1986 and has been continuously in effect since then. This piece of legislation will require that adults pay court costs just like the under-18 year drivers already pay. Court costs are already paid on all other traffic violations so it is time that adult seat belt violators pay these costs as well or buckle up.

We have our families to think of. If you die or are permanently crippled and disabled, your family would be tragically affected, perhaps economically, but certainly emotionally.

## Talking Points – Costs to Idaho for Not Buckling Up

The three biggest killers on Idaho's roads are; lack of seat belt use, impaired driving, & speed (aggressive driving). They were each contributors in over 100 traffic deaths in 2007. The fines for each violation are \$1,000 and jail time for a first time DUI, \$75 and up for a speeding ticket, and \$10 for a seat belt violation.

Everything we do to improve safety on Idaho's roads is compromised by our seat belt use rate (two thirds of occupants killed in traffic crashes in 2007 weren't properly restrained). The seat belt is the most effective safety device ever introduced for vehicles (NHTSA Traffic Safety Facts 2003).

### Saving Idaho tax dollars:

1. Idaho's recent past shows that increased belt use resulted in decreased unbelted deaths and serious injuries. This saves taxpayer's dollars.

RESTRAINT USE IN IDAHO TRAFFIC CRASHES

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2. Harborview Injury Prevention & Research Center study on St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center 2001-2004 for crash victims showed that unrestrained passengers are more likely to be injured and require costly medical care;
  - \* Data from an Idaho trauma hospital show it costs an extra \$10,432 to care for each unrestrained vehicle passenger.
  - \* An additional 971 people are admitted to Idaho hospitals for injuries that would have been prevented by seat belt use.
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  - \* **Annual preventable motor vehicle crash (MVC) health care costs paid by Idaho state budget = \$9,141,252.**

3. According to a recent Idaho Trauma Registry study, the lack of safety restraint use when involved in a traffic crash has an impact on the average length of hospitalization. 36% of unbelted victims had an average length of stay of 8+ days, while just 20% of belted victims had an 8+ day length of stay. This is based on data from 14 Idaho hospitals from Oct 1, 2006 to Sept 30, 2007.

#### Fine Information

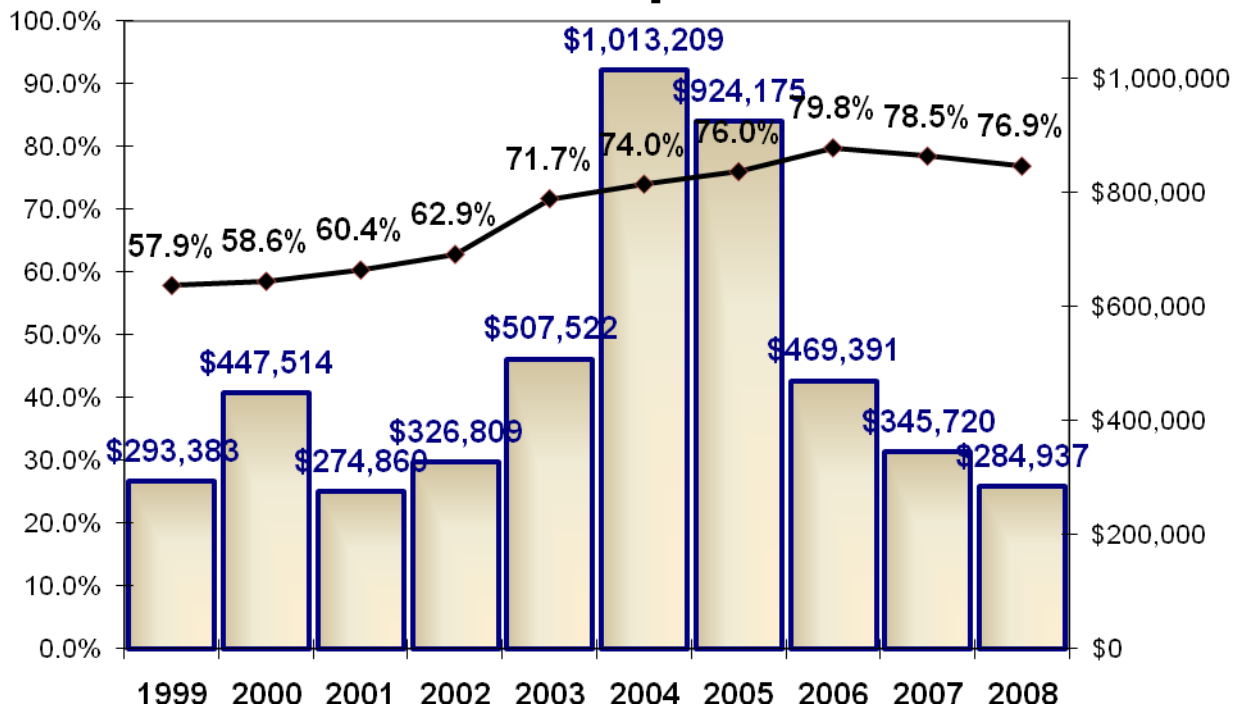
If people who choose not to wear a seat belt had to pay for their own higher medical costs, each ticket for an unrestrained occupant should cost \$340 to recover Idaho state budget health care expenses.

(Harborview study)

The current price of a seat belt fine is low relative to other infractions. Infraction penalties:

- \$10 - Adult failure to fasten seat belt
- \$46 - Pedestrian and bicycle infraction (jay walking)
- \$52 - Non-moving traffic infractions (broken tail light, no registration in vehicle)
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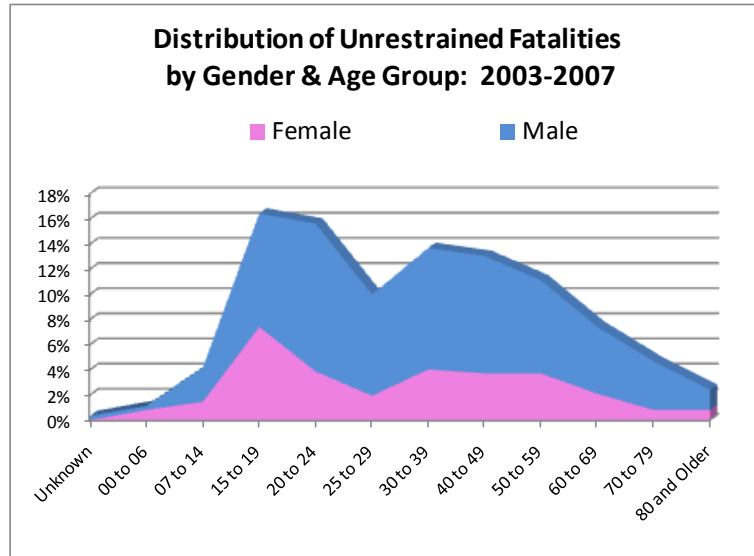
## Observed Seat Belt Use and Funds Spent



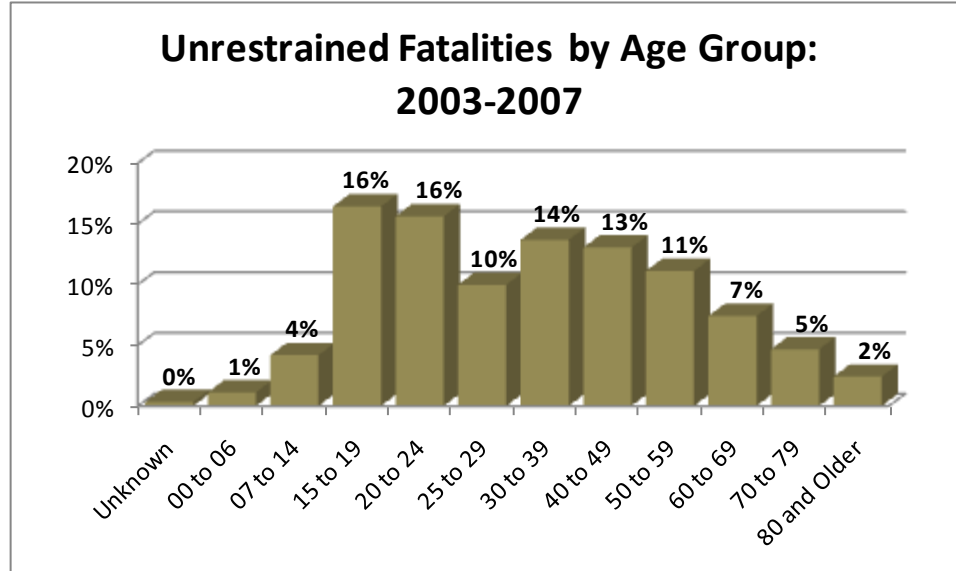
## Who Are the Unbelted Killed

### Idaho Unrestrained Passenger Motor Vehicle Occupant Fatality Profile: 2003-2007

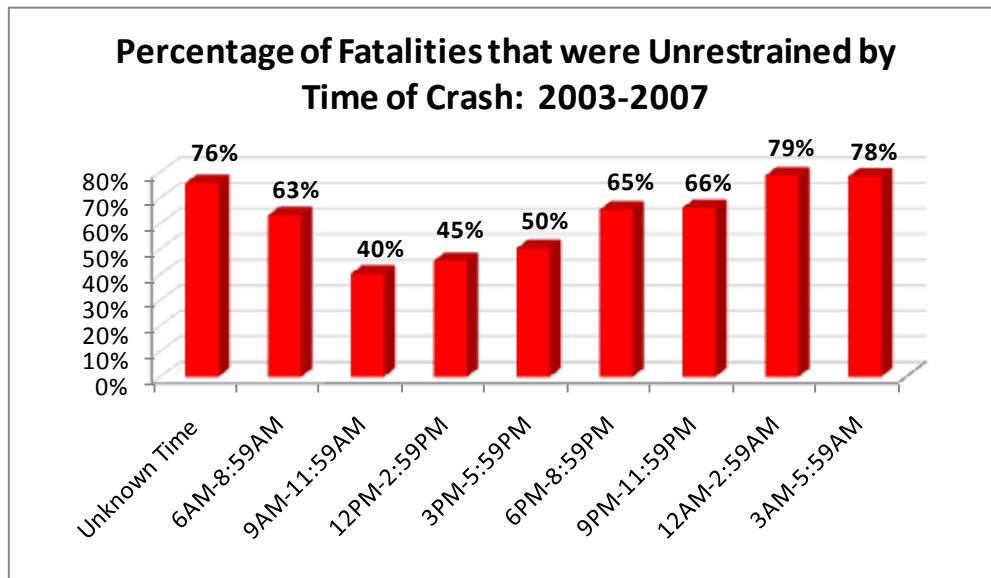
- There were 1,035 Passenger Motor Vehicle (PMV) occupants killed in traffic crashes in the last 5 years (from 2003 to 2007). Of the 1,035 killed, 608 (58.7%) were unrestrained.
- 69% of the unrestrained PMV occupants killed were male.



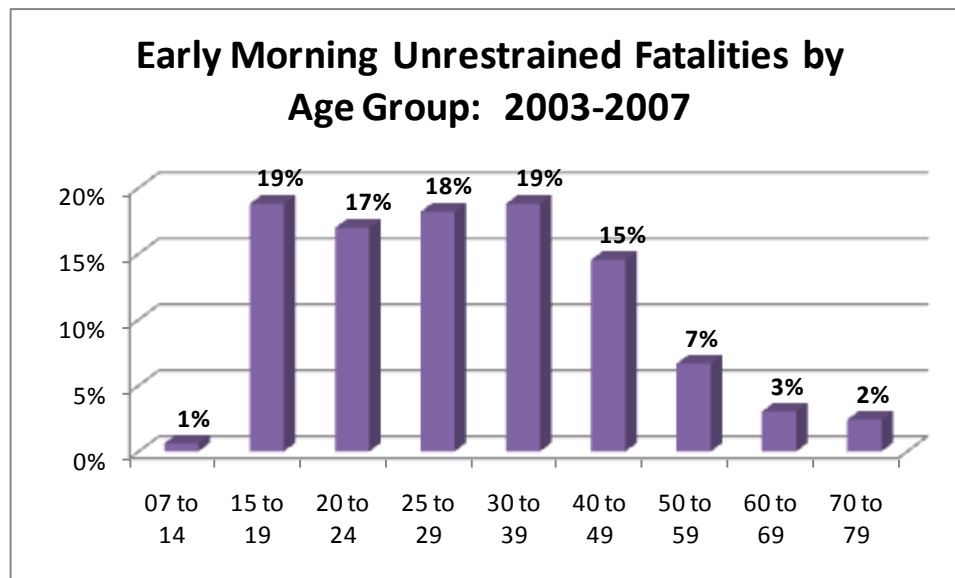
- Nearly one-third (32%) of the unrestrained PMV occupants killed were ages 15-24.



- The average age of the unrestrained PMV occupants killed was 36.3 years old.
- A higher percentage of the total PMV occupant fatalities in the early morning (12AM to 5:59AM) were unrestrained. However, only one-fifth (20%) of the PMV occupant fatalities occurred during this time period.



- The average age of the unrestrained PMV occupants killed in the early morning (12:00 AM to 5:59 AM) was 32.1, compared to an average age of 38.8 for unrestrained PMV occupants killed during the day (6:00 AM to 5:59 PM).
- Ages 15-29 made up 54% of the unrestrained PMV occupant fatalities occurring in the early morning (12:00 AM to 5:59 AM).



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